

ISLAM

On the doorstep of death

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Of all the stages through which a person will have to pass, death is the most certain. It is possible for one not to be endowed with life at all, but one who is alive is sure, also, to die. Everyone who is alive now will be dead sometime in the future. One day the eyes of those who see will fade and their tongues freeze into silence.

Every human being will one day find himself standing at death's doorstep, with this world behind him and ahead of him the eternal world of the hereafter. He will be leaving this world, never to return, and entering a world which he will never leave.

In the world which he is entering, there will be no opportunity for action; there will be only salvation or damnation in accordance with one's actions on earth.

The gravity of the situation lies in death not being the end of life, but rather the beginning of a new, eternal life, a world of everlasting reward or retribution.

Everyone is on a journey from life unto death. Some have set their sights on the world, others on the hereafter.

Some dwell on what meets the eye, others on what lies beyond the superficial gaze. Some strive to satisfy their own desires and egos, others are restless in love and fear of God.

Both types of people appear the same in this world: they both take rest when night comes, and in the morning, once again pursue their chosen paths in life.

But in relation to the life after death, there is a world of difference between the two: those who live in God and the Hereafter are redeeming themselves, while those who live in worldly pleasures and selfish desires are condemning themselves to doom.

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